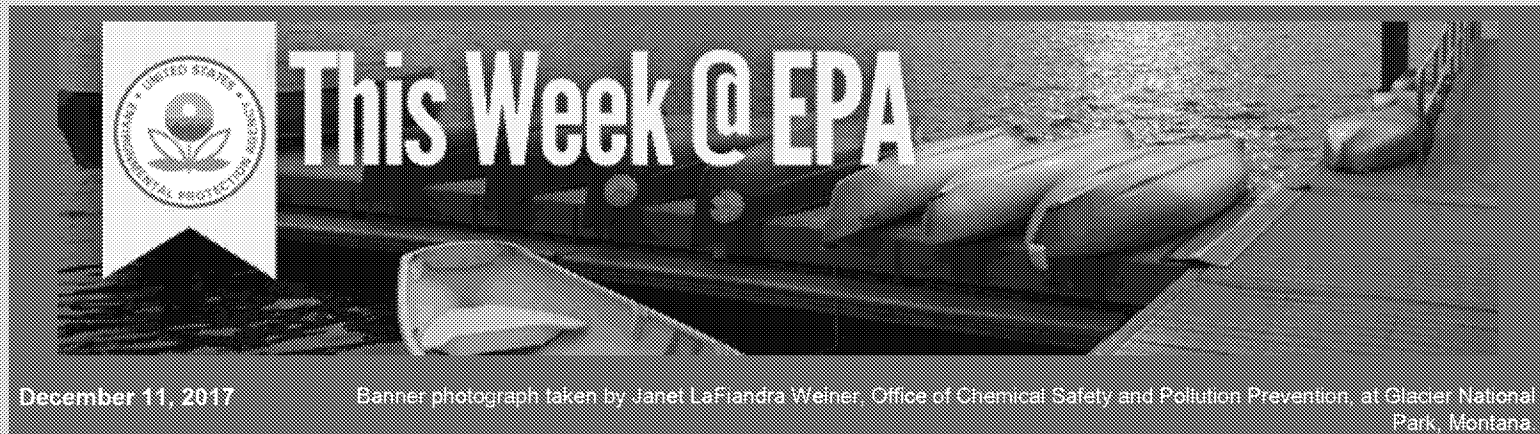


Message

From: This Week @ EPA [epanews@epa.gov]
Sent: 12/11/2017 4:24:21 PM
To: This Week @ EPA [epanews@epa.gov]
Subject: This Week @ EPA - December 11, 2017



December 11, 2017

Banner photograph taken by Janet LaFiandra Weiner, Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, at Glacier National Park, Montana.

[Senior Leadership Message](#) | [Hot Topics](#) | [Key Dates](#) | [Video Spotlight](#) | [Health & Wellness](#) | [IT Corner](#)

Winter Photo Call! We had another great season of photos thanks to you! Now the winter season is quickly approaching. Please share your winter-themed photos with us, and they may appear as the This Week @ EPA nameplate. Send a maximum of five photos. Each photo should be horizontally oriented and a minimum size of 300 KB at 72 dpi. Please include the location of the photo in your submission email. Unfortunately, we cannot accept photos from non-federal employees. You must be an EPA employee to submit. Note that by submitting your image, you are giving us the right to use it, with attribution, for agency internal communications purposes, such as in the newsletter, on the agency intranet, and in internal videos.
Submission deadline: Dec. 29. Please submit to: internalcomms@epa.gov. Thanks!

Mass Mailer Reminders

In case you missed them, there were a few important messages from EPA senior leaders recently:

- Administrator Pruitt [recognized EPA's recipients of the 2017 Presidential Rank Awards](#).
- Assistant Deputy Administrator and Chief of Operations Henry Darwin [announced the availability of the EPA Lean Management System's business review process training video and slides](#).
- Office of Administration and Resources Management's Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator Donna Vizian shared [EPA's results for the 2017 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings](#).

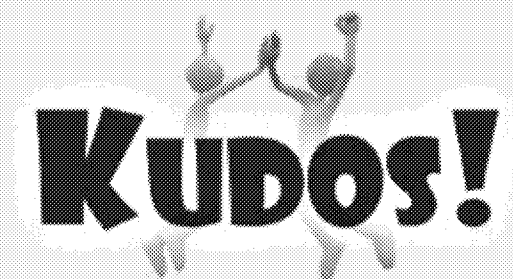
Hot Topics

And the award goes to . . .

In this season of office awards, when staff are recognized for their contributions over the last year, we thought you might be interested in what some of our regional and program offices are doing to recognize their colleagues throughout the year. Providing frequent and meaningful opportunities for recognition not only boosts morale, but increases information sharing about significant work. Check out these ideas for providing more opportunities for recognition across your office:

- Region 10's **Kudos Project** was launched as a way for staff to provide real-time, informal recognition to coworkers. To "give a kudo," staff submit the coworker's name along with a short description of the work recognized through a [SharePoint site](#). The information is displayed publicly on their intranet page, and the Kudo! recipient gets a colorful magnet to display outside their cubicle. Recipients are also recognized in the annual regional awards ceremony. Contact [Michelle Mullin](#) and [Beth Sheldrake](#) for more information.
- The Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM) started an internal communications video series called [OLEM-Me-Tell-You](#), which showcases informal stories on environmental topics and employee interests. The series builds on the success of the OLEM Workforce Advisory Board's employee-focused "OLEM Talks" presentations, and continues OLEM's commitment to their Employee Engagement Action Plan. OLEM also launched an **Employee-at-a-Glance Project** to feature staff profiles on their intranet page. Contact [Matt Colip](#) for more information.

For additional ideas, check [the compiled list of intranet kudos and appreciation projects](#) from other offices.

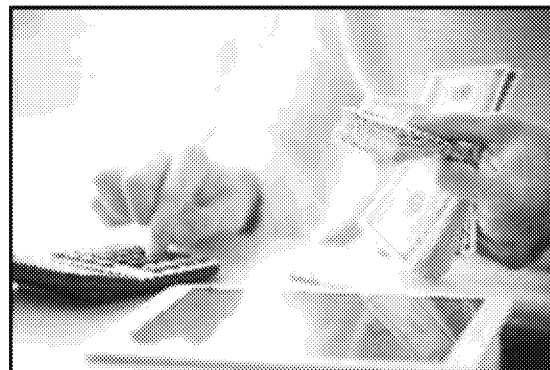


Direct deposit date change to Jan. 2, 2018

Employees will see their direct deposit for the pay period ending Dec. 23 on **Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2018, instead of Friday, Dec. 29, 2017.** This will ensure that, for tax purposes, earnings are reported in the appropriate calendar year.

The "official pay date" for the agency is the second Tuesday following the end of the pay period, in this case Jan. 2. Electronic Funds Transactions (EFT) are normally the first Friday of the pay period, which is why most employees typically see direct deposits post every other Friday rather than on the "official pay date" of every other Tuesday. The agency's payroll provider is delaying the EFT date for the pay period ending Dec. 23.

Please make any necessary adjustments to automatic payments or transfers in your bank account to accommodate this one-time change in the pay deposit schedule. If you have any additional questions, please send your inquiries to the System Help desk at 202-564-6236 or email HRPayHelp@epa.gov.



Community stories podcast from Harlan, Kentucky

Communities request EPA technical assistance to address a variety of challenges. One program - [Local Foods, Local Places \(LFLP\)](#) - focuses on how communities can use local foods to revitalize economies, encourage healthy outcomes, and protect the environment.

A new [podcast](#) explores how EPA worked with Harlan, Kentucky, to help the community achieve its vision and goals around local foods. At the LFLP workshop earlier this year, community members and federal partners explored opening a new farmers market downtown, incorporating local food and arts heritage into downtown revitalization and reusing existing and currently vacant properties to help reinvigorate the local economy. Listen to what leaders of the farmers market, an aspiring food entrepreneur, representatives from the local health center and community college, and the county agricultural extension agent and other government partners have to say about this assistance and the brighter future they hope to bring to Harlan.

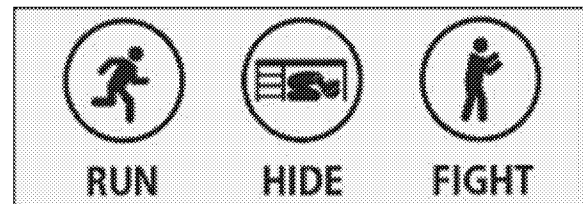


For more information on either the Local Foods, Local Places podcast or program, please contact Stephanie Bertaina, Office of Sustainable Communities, at Bertaina.Stephanie@epa.gov or 202-566-0157.

Active shooter guidance

This is a reminder to always be mindful of your surroundings so you so you can make decisions that are critical to surviving emergencies, such as an active shooter incident.

In an active shooter incident, you must quickly determine the best available option to protect your life based on where you are when you hear gunfire. You have three options: Run, Hide, or Fight.



1. Evacuate (RUN)

- Leave personal belongings behind.
- Warn others away from the area.
- Keep your hands visible as you exit the building and follow the directions of responding law enforcement.

2. Hide out (HIDE)

- Move to a safe location; lock and barricade the entrance.
- Hide behind large objects that provide cover (ballistic protection) and concealment (hide you from the active shooter's view).
- Silence or turn off mobile telephones and remain quiet.

3. Take action against the active shooter as a last resort (FIGHT)

- Act as aggressively as possible and commit to your actions.
- Throw objects and use improvised weapons.
- Once subdued, bind the active shooter's hands and feet and separate the shooter from the weapon. **DO NOT HOLD THE SHOOTER AT GUNPOINT.**

For more information, visit the [Active Shooter Response and Preparedness](#) page on the EPA intranet.

Office of Inspector General releases Semiannual Report to Congress

Every six months, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) is statutorily required to submit a report to Congress detailing the office's activities, findings, and recommendations. In November 2017, OIG submitted its *Semiannual Report to Congress* for the April 1-Sep 30, 2017 period, during which OIG released audit and evaluation reports, issued management challenges, performed investigations, and addressed hotline inquiries. Among the OIG's accomplishments:

- More than \$57.84 million in questioned costs and recommended efficiencies
- More than \$6.03 million in total fines and recoveries (including EPA only and joint investigations)
- 249 reports issued (44 by EPA OIG and 205 by single auditors)
- 68 investigative cases closed
- 128 administrative actions resulting from investigative cases
- 278 hotline inquiries closed
- 403 hotline inquiries referred for action

In addition, this semiannual report details 65 still-open recommendations from past reports, which have the potential to save the EPA and taxpayers \$109.2 million.

For more information about the EPA OIG:

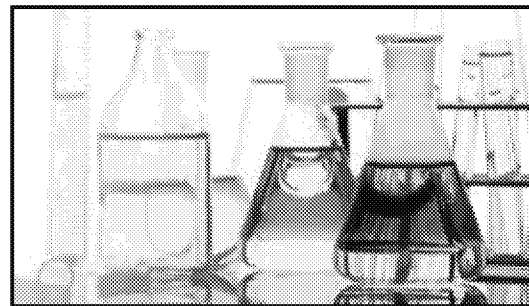
- Visit the [OIG website](#).
- Subscribe to our [OIG email updates](#).
- Learn more about our [OIG Hotline](#).
- Follow us on Twitter [@EPAoig](#).

EPA launches cross-agency effort to address PFAS

EPA recently announced a cross-agency effort to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The agency's water and research offices will lead the effort, and regional offices will help to enhance cooperation with partners at the state and local levels and to provide on-the-ground knowledge about specific issues - and address PFAS nationwide.

As part of the agency's work, EPA will:

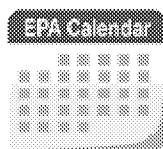
- Identify a set of near-term actions EPA will take to help support local communities.
- Enhance coordination with states, tribes, and federal partners to provide communities with critical information and tools to address PFAS.
- Increase ongoing research efforts to identify new methods for measuring PFAS and filling data gaps.
- Expand proactive communications efforts with states, tribes, partners, and the American public about PFAS and their health effects.



Read the [full press release](#), or visit the [PFAS in Your Environment](#) web page for more information.

Key Dates

Video Spotlight



password.

Happening this week:

Click on each event below to get more details.
Click on the "Add to Calendar" button to add an event to your Outlook calendar.
If you see a log-in screen, please click on your EPA email, or if prompted, enter your email and network

Wet Wood is a Waste

EPA offers tips on how to properly use a moisture meter to test firewood before burning it in a stove or fireplace. Wet wood creates excessive smoke, which is wasted fuel. Burning dry, seasoned firewood with a moisture content of 20 percent or less can save money and help reduce harmful air pollution -- indoors and out.

Dec. 11: Reminder: Federal Benefits Open Season ends Dec. 11

 [ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

Coming soon:

Dec 19: PeoplePlus early closeout: Corrected timecards due (employees)

 [ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

Dec. 19: PeoplePlus early closeout: Corrected timecard approvals (supervisors)

 [ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

Dec. 21: PeoplePlus early entry: Timecard entries due (employees)

 [ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

Dec. 21: PeoplePlus early entry: Timecard approvals due (supervisors)

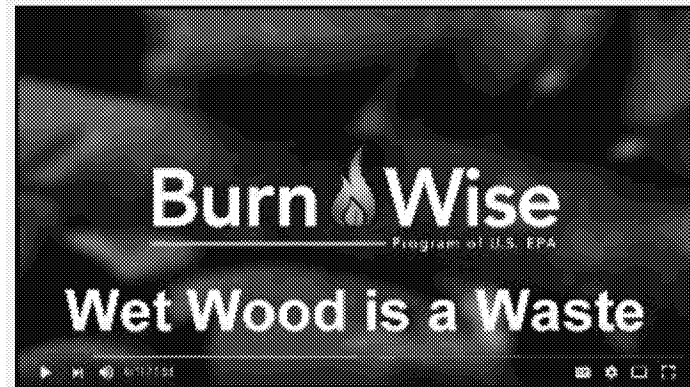
 [ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

Dec. 31: 2017 Annual Ethics Training deadline

 [ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

Jan 2: Direct deposit date change

 [ADD TO CALENDAR](#)



Total time: 1:59

Health & Wellness

Hello handwashing, goodbye germs

Proper handwashing is the simplest way to prevent the spread of germs, disease, and illness. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the proper handwashing technique is:



- Wet hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously and scrub all surfaces for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry hands using a clean towel or air dryer.

If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol. In addition to proper handwashing, you can keep germ-free by following these tips:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Limit close contact with sick people.
- Clean and/or disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.

For more information, visit the [Handwashing page on the EPA intranet](#).

IT Corner

New character count requirement for LAN passwords

Beginning Dec. 13, EPA employees changing their LAN password will need to comply with new character



count requirements. The change is to help ensure employees strengthen their passwords, which is critical to information security.

The current eight-character password is being increased to a minimum of 12 characters with the following requirements:

- Password length must be a minimum of 12 characters and contain characters from three of the following four categories:
 - At least one digit (0-9).
 - At least one symbol (~, !, @, #, \$, %, +, <, >, /, ?).
 - At least one uppercase English letter (A-Z).
 - At least one lowercase English letter (a-z).
- Must **not** contain your username, dictionary words, simple words, or any part of your full name that exceeds two characters (example: cannot be 'SMI', if your last name is 'SMITH').
- Must differ from previous password by four characters.
- Must differ from previous 24 passwords.

For more details, visit the [New LAN Password Update web page](#).

We would love to hear your feedback about this newsletter. Please contact us at: internalcomms@epa.gov | <http://intranet.epa.gov/internalcomms>
Looking for previous editions of the Newsletter? Go to the [Newsletter Archive](#)